

# Planning Commission Report

**To:** City Council

**From:** Planning Commission

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**Date:** September 1, 2004

**DGA Number:** L040232

**Recommendations:**

**Planning Commission:** Approval for Annexation and Regional Planning; Parks, Recreation and Arts; Participation, Implementation and Evaluation; and Transportation Elements. Recommendations will be provided as addendums to this report for the Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements.

**Recommended Action:** Adopt Ordinance No. \_\_\_\_\_, amending the Redmond Comprehensive Plan to add updated elements for Annexation and Regional Planning; Parks, Recreation and Arts; Participation, Implementation and Evaluation; and Transportation. Recommendations will be provided as addendums to this report for the Utilities and Capital Facilities Elements. The recommended elements are located in Exhibit A.

**Summary:** Redmond is working on a major update of its Comprehensive Plan. This amendment is being undertaken to address both City policy to periodically evaluate and update the Comprehensive Plan, as well as to address requirements under the Growth Management Act for review and update of comprehensive plans by the end of 2004.

## Background

In September 2003, the City Council adopted the updated vision, goals, and framework policies that, together with the preferred 20-year growth strategy, set the direction for this update. In August 2004, the City Council adopted updates for several of the more specific elements of the

Comprehensive Plan, including Downtown, Community Character and Historic Preservation, Human Services, Land Use, Housing, and Economic Vitality.

The Planning Commission's third set of policy recommendations involve updates to the following elements: Annexation and Regional Planning; Parks, Recreation and Arts; Participation, Implementation and Evaluation; Transportation; Utilities; and Capital Facilities.

See Exhibit B for an overview of the recommended elements and a summary of major recommended policy updates compared to the existing policies.

**Reasons the  
Proposal should be  
Adopted:**

The proposed amendment should be adopted because:

- It reflects and supports the preferred growth strategy selected by City Council; the updated vision, goals and framework policies; and updates to the land use-related elements of the Comprehensive Plan.
- It refines policies to better reflect community vision and values, as evidenced by: comments from the Planning Commission during study session discussions on the topic, citizen comments from public meetings, and comments from the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce.
- It updates the existing policies to remove those that have been completed or become outdated, improve readability, and eliminate redundancy.

## **Recommended Findings of Fact**

### ***1. Public Hearing and Notice.***

#### **Public Hearing Date**

The City of Redmond Planning Commission held public hearings on the proposed amendments as follows: Transportation (May 19, 2004), Annexation/Regional Planning and Parks, Recreation and Arts (July 28, 2004); Participation, Implementation and Evaluation (August 11, 2004); and Capital Facilities and Utilities (August 18, 2004). The hearings were very lightly attended. Minutes for the public hearings will be provided as Exhibit D. Comments from the public hearings are also summarized in the issue tables in Exhibit C.

#### **Notice**

Notices of the public hearings were published in the Eastside edition of the Seattle Times. Public notices were posted in City Hall and at the Redmond Library. Notice was also given by including the hearing in Planning Commission agendas and extended agendas mailed to various

members of the public and various agencies. Hearing notices were also included on the City's web site. Copies of the proposed amendments were available in City Hall and from the City's web site.

The City also mailed a summary of proposed updates for the Annexation and Regional Planning; Parks, Recreation and Arts; Participation, Implementation and Evaluation; Utilities; and Capital Facilities elements to a mailing list of more than 400 people who have participated in previous workshops or expressed interest in planning related issues. This mailing included notice of the July 28, 2004 public hearing, and contacts for information on upcoming hearings (which were not scheduled at the time of the mailing).

### **Additional Outreach**

Members of the Parks Board, Trails Commission, and Arts Commission attended several meetings where City staff sought ideas on potential updates to the Parks and Recreation Element. Following these meetings, copies of staff recommended updates were distributed to members of the Parks Board, Arts Commission, and Trails Commission for review, and staff attended the July meeting of the Parks Board to seek comments.

The proposed updates are also in response to citizen comments from initial public meetings, including Housing Fair, Redmond Design Day, and a number of neighborhood meetings. Numerous community meetings held as part of development of the Transportation Master Plan also informed the proposed amendment.

Staff has also met with members of the Greater Redmond Chamber of Commerce committees to provide an overview of and discuss draft updates for the Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Participation, Evaluation and Implementation Elements. There has also been outreach on the entire Comprehensive Plan update through several articles on issues under consideration in *Focus on Redmond*, through the Redmond 2022 portion of the City's web site, and through articles in the *Redmond Reporter*.

## **2. Public Comments.**

Exhibit D will include the public hearing minutes. Comments on specific issues are also summarized in Exhibit C.

## **Recommended Conclusions**

### **1. Key Issues Raised by the Planning Commission**

The Planning Commission held several initial study sessions with City staff to review and discuss existing policies for two of the elements in this package: Transportation and Parks and Recreation. For the remaining three elements (Capital Facilities, Utilities, and Participation,

Implementation and Evaluation), staff provided a brief overview of initial concepts for updates for Planning Commission review and feedback.

The purpose of the initial study sessions to review the existing Transportation Element was two-fold. In addition to enabling Planning Commission to provide early input and direction for staff use in developing updates, the sessions were an opportunity to draw on Charlier Associates' transportation expertise and experience. Staff and Charlier Associates also met with City Council during several study sessions in late 2003 and early 2004 for a similar purpose.

As preparation for these study sessions, Charlier Associates with the assistance of staff prepared a series of policy assessment papers (listed below) that helped inform the update.

- Transportation Policies Evaluation, July 18, 2003
- Review of Transit Provisions Related to Transportation Policy, October 22, 2003
- Review of Land Use Provisions Related to Transportation Policy, November 14, 2003
- Review of Mobility Provisions Related to Transportation Policy, December 5, 2003
- Review of Concurrency Provisions Related to Transportation Policy, February 18, 2004

The Planning Commission also held several initial study sessions to review the existing Parks and Recreation Element and to provide direction for staff use in developing recommended updates. One of these sessions was a joint meeting of representatives of the Planning Commission, Parks Board, Trails Commission, and Arts Commission. In addition, City staff attended meetings of the Parks Board, Trails Commission, and Arts Commission to seek ideas on potential updates to the Parks and Recreation Element.

Below is a summary of the Planning Commission's major discussion issues for four of the six elements in this package: Parks, Recreation and Arts; Annexation and Regional Planning; and Participation, Implementation and Evaluation; and Transportation. Exhibit C includes a more detailed summary of the Planning Commission's major discussion issues and responses. Key issues raised by the Planning Commission for the Utilities and Capital Facilities Element will be provided as addendums to this report.

### **Facility Related Elements Overall**

As part of updates to these elements, the Planning Commission discussed and endorsed a staff recommended change to much more clearly distinguish between the role of the Comprehensive Plan and the role of the various functional plans, the detailed, long-range plans concerning needs, funding, and timing for improvements, such as parks or utilities. The recommended updates focus the Comprehensive Plan as the document that articulates the community's overall long-term vision and values as expressed through policies. The functional plans will be focused on the specific programming and implementation strategies to carry out these values and policies. With the Transportation Element in particular, this update includes setting the stage for ultimately locating specific transportation provisions such as maps and lists of planned, long-range transportation improvements in the Transportation Master Plan once adopted. For the Parks, Recreation and Arts Element, specific examples of changes as part of this update include removing detailed maps and inventory information from the Parks, Recreation and Arts Element and referencing maps in the PRO Plan.

### **Parks, Recreation and Arts Element**

The Planning Commission discussed several policies that identify the variety of services and facilities provided as part of Redmond's parks systems. The Planning Commission wanted these policies to indicate equal consideration of competitive, organized recreational activities and passive or contemplative activities. Further, the Commission believed it was important for the policies to clearly indicate that any listing of activities was not meant to be exhaustive. The Commission added certain other uses to these policies, again, in order to identify, but not prioritize. For example, pea-patches and public gardens were included in these lists as potential uses that could be unique and beneficial for Redmond residents. The Planning Commission believed that establishing priorities in this area is best left to the Park Board.

The Planning Commission was also very interested in the further enhancement of the City's trail system, and its relation to the regional system. The linkage of neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas by a trail system was discussed by the Commissioners as an important mechanism to promote non-motorized transportation. Thus, there are several policies which speak to the need for a well-maintained and identifiable system with appropriate signage that is integrated, as much as possible with other modes of travel, especially with public transportation or bicycle routes. The Sammamish River is identified as link within this system as it is recognized as part of the regional "Lakes to Locks" water trail system.

The need for additional usable open space and recreational facilities for higher density areas of the City was discussed by the Planning Commission. Downtown and Overlake were identified as areas in which there should be additional expenditures for parks or new requirements for the provision of usable open space by private development. One Commissioner expressed the belief that proposed policies did not articulate this idea strongly enough: there should be priority for parks and recreation expenditures in higher density areas of the City, as the need is greater for residents and employees in these areas, where other recreational options are few. Several proposed policies are supportive of this concept, while also recognizing the importance of an equitable distribution of services based on other criteria identified in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan adopted in June, 2004.

Finally, the Planning Commission believed it was important to include a new policy that addresses the use of concessions within City parks. The Redmond Municipal Code currently provides the authority for the consideration of concessions, if they are supportive of the primary, recreational use of the park. Previously, there was no Comprehensive Plan policy for this purpose.

### **Annexation and Regional Planning Element**

The primary issue discussed by the Planning Commission for the Annexation and Regional Planning Element concerned proposed policy A-13:

Require developers to construct or fund public facilities to serve that development and require owners to construct or pay for health and safety related improvements related to

their property for newly annexed areas. Consider using capital facilities funding as a supplement or instead of owner or developer funding if a city-wide benefit can be shown for public facility improvements for those areas.

There was concern among some Commissioners that this policy was counter to the policy of development paying for the cost of growth-related infrastructure. Following discussion, the Commissioners agreed that this policy still emphasizes developer extension of facilities but allows for the case where a deficit could be corrected with other funding. It was also noted that the City Council would have to approve such an action on a case by case basis.

### **Participation, Implementation and Evaluation Element**

The primary issue discussed by the Planning Commission for the Participation, Implementation and Evaluation Element concerned citizen access to information dealing with Redmond City Government and to what extent the City should direct additional resources to this purpose. One Commissioner commented that it would be very valuable for the City to significantly expand the types and number of documents and other information available through the City's web site and suggested adding a policy in support of this concept. Types of documents suggested included emails to Planning Commissioners, any documents related to issues under consideration by the City Council or the City boards and commissions, and administrative documents. Such a system would enable people to electronically search for any City-related discussion or work underway on any topic. Another Commissioner commented that the resources needed to establish such a system are better directed to other City needs, especially in light of the current budget constraints. Other Commissioners believed that increasing the amount of information available electronically is a valid goal, but believed that it needs to be balanced with what is feasible given City resources and needs. The Commissioners agreed to revise recommended policy PI-7 to call for increasing electronic access to information concerning City government, as feasible.

### **Transportation Element**

The Planning Commission raised several issues with respect to proposed updates to the Transportation Element. These issues were discussed at the various study sessions and at the public hearing, and each was resolved. Microsoft Corporation provided the only public testimony, and submitted written comments on proposed updates to the element.

The key issues and policies raised by the Planning Commission were as follows:

- Requiring that all future roadways, including those funded by the state and county, be compatible with the land use goals and policies in the Redmond Comprehensive Plan;
- Requiring the improvement in operating efficiency of the street system as a priority over widening streets;
- Asking whether the proposed concurrency system policies serve the goals, vision, and framework policies of the Redmond Comprehensive Plan, as adopted by the City Council in September 2003. Much of the Planning Commission's discussion concerned the "Plan-Based" approach to transportation concurrency. Jim Charlier discussed this new approach, stating that the focus is on building a transportation system that supports the

City's adopted land uses. In the Plan Based approach, the transportation system is to be built proportionately with development, with a single annual testing of concurrency to ensure this proportionality. Monitoring of the operational aspects of the street system will still occur; however, this will be done at the screen line level, rather than through exclusive monitoring of individual intersection operations.

The Commission supported moving away from the current roadway intersection measurement of concurrency, towards a more comprehensive concurrency management system. Since the Plan Based concurrency system is new, there is strong interest in the details of this system that will be contained in the concurrency regulations that will be prepared next year.

- Discussing the meaning of “fair-share” with respect to charging development a set impact fee for transportation mitigation. There was recognition that fair-share can be defined specifically or generally. The Commission concluded that a policy describing more specifically what fair-share meant should be considered as part of updating the Capital Facilities Element, covering mitigation not only for transportation, but also for fire and park impacts;
- Discussing and agreeing upon a typology of streets and pedestrian environments, with the designations of “pedestrian places”, “pedestrian supportive environments”, “pedestrian tolerant environments”, and “pedestrian intolerant environments”, and setting a standard such that no area of the City shall be designated less than a “pedestrian tolerant environment”;
- Supporting traffic calming in neighborhoods; and,
- Allocating transportation resources based upon a series of priorities, where public health and safety concerns are addressed first; maintenance of the transportation system second, and then meeting level-of-service and concurrency requirements third. After all of these concerns are met, the City should then spend according to a set of priorities depending on the situation. This includes addressing substandard facilities, missing links, poorly designed facilities, promoting travel choices, forming funding partnerships, and increasing the efficiency of the transportation system before looking at expanding general-purpose vehicle capacity.

Key issues raised by Microsoft included:

- Concern about how the proposed Plan-Based approach to concurrency would work;
- Understanding how the preservation of neighborhood character would limit the expansion of arterials to a specified number of traffic lanes. 148<sup>th</sup> Avenue N.E. in Grass Lawn was used as an example of an arterial that would be limited to five lanes in width, in order to preserve the residential character of the adjacent neighborhoods;
- Desiring flexibility in allocating transportation resources;
- Concern about requiring that all areas of Redmond be at least pedestrian tolerant. That this standard might lead to unnecessary construction of pedestrian improvements in areas with few pedestrians; and,

- Concern about the proposed Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policy being too stringent, with little flexibility for allowing parking ratios higher than the standards contained in the Community Development Guide.

Eventually each of the issues raised by the Planning Commission were resolved. Staff met with representatives of Microsoft, and developed wording to respond to Microsoft's concerns, particularly with respect to TDM and parking.

## **2. *Recommended Conclusions of the Technical Committee.***

The recommended conclusions in the Technical Committee Reports (Exhibit E) should be adopted as conclusions.

## **3. *Planning Commission Recommendation.***

The Planning Commission unanimously approved motions to recommend the Annexation and Regional Planning; Transportation; Parks, Recreation and Arts; and Participation, Implementation and Evaluation elements. Recommendations on the Capital Facilities and Utilities Elements will be provided as addendums to this report.

## **List of Exhibits**

<b>Exhibit A:</b>	<b>Planning Commission's Recommended Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan</b>
<b>Exhibit B:</b>	<b>Summary of Major Policy Recommendations</b>
<b>Exhibit C:</b>	<b>Planning Commission Issue Tables</b>
	<b>Commissioner Dunn Minority Report on Transportation Element</b>
<b>Exhibit D:</b>	<b>Public Comments</b>
<b>Exhibit E:</b>	<b>Technical Committee Report</b>



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Roberta Lewandowski, Planning Director

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Date

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Martin Snodgrass, Planning Commission Chairperson

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Date

Approved for Council Agenda

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Rosemarie Ives, Mayor

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Date

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